



Violence and Aggression towards Staff Policy

Kington St. Michael C.E. Primary School

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Statement of Intent

This policy sets out Kington St. Michael CE Primary School policy and procedures to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence.

The school will not tolerate any instances of work-related violence, including verbal abuse, to our staff.

All instances of violence will be dealt with swiftly and fairly, and any affected staff will be responded to sensitively and provided with appropriate support.

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1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and government guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- HSE (2009) 'Preventing workplace harassment and violence'
- DfE (2018) 'Controlling access to school premises'
- DfE (2019) 'School and college security'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following KSM school policies:

- Behaviour Policy and Anti-bullying Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Policy statement for children with medical needs
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Health and safety Policy
- Staff behaviour Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Protective Security and Lockdown Policy

2. Definition of Violence

The school will follow definitions used by the HSE for the purposes of this policy.

The HSE defines work-related violence as: 'Any incident, in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.' This can include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks, and violence towards a member of staff's property.

The HSE defines an incident as: 'An unwanted, unplanned event that has the potential to cause harm/injury.'

Examples of behaviour classed as 'violence' or 'aggression'.

Kicking
Biting
Hitting
Slapping
Punching
Poking or pushing
Spitting
Scratching
Head butting
Tripping
Actions that restrict movement
Unwanted physical contact which results in no injury
Use of weapons
Use of missiles
Swearing



Other verbal or written abuse which causes personal offence or distress

Sexual, racial or other harassment

Bullying

Intimidation

Damage to personal property

Other aggressive behaviours:

- Shouting
- Posturing
- Gestures
- Insults
- Innuendo
- Unreasonable demands or blackmail

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will:

- Understand and follow their duty of care towards school staff and pupils and ensure the school is a place where both staff and pupils are safe from violence or aggression.
- Ensure all staff are informed, through the headteacher, of any circumstances which are likely to carry a risk of violent or aggressive behaviour.
- Ensure a continuing programme of risk assessments of violence towards staff is maintained, in close consultation with the headteacher.
- Ensure adequate training is provided for staff, e.g. on the use of reasonable force and de-escalation strategies.
- Oversee the implementation of this policy and monitor its effectiveness.

The headteacher will:

- Undertake a work-related violence risk assessment, in liaison with the SLT, and review this annually. Use Wiltshire Councils '*School Risk Assessment for Violence and Aggression.*'
- Communicate the contents of any work-related violence risk assessments to all staff.
- Ensure separate risk assessments are undertaken where there is a known risk of violence or aggression towards staff, e.g. a pupil with severe behavioural issues or SEND.
- Monitor incidences of violence and abuse and initiate appropriate action if further measures are needed.
- Ensure that all staff have read and understood this policy.

The SLT will:

- Treat any reports of work-related violence, threats or abuse seriously and respond to them promptly.
- Record details of any incidents and provide support to any affected members of staff and pupils.
- Establish an environment where staff members are encouraged to support each other and look out for each other.



All members of staff will:

- Follow this Policy and follow the procedures for preventing incidents, dealing with incidents, and recording and reporting incidents.
- Report every instance of probable violence and/or aggression, and any hazards, risks or problems, to the headteacher or a member of the SLT.
- Undertake any relevant training as directed by the headteacher.
- Assess the risk to themselves in each situation and do their utmost to ensure their **own** safety.
- Understand that they should not accept or ignore any instances of work-related violence directed towards themselves or others.
- Work with the police and any other relevant agencies where needed, e.g. due to an investigation.

4. Preventing work-related violence

Violence and aggression are unacceptable and no member of staff should be required to endure either as a normal part of their work. However, given the nature of the services we provide it is acknowledged that some staff may, on occasion, encounter violence or aggression. In these circumstances, reasonable measures are to be applied to eliminate or minimise the risks.

These measures go beyond basic compliance with statutory duties because the Department for Children and Education, and its partners, recognise the wider benefits of effective procedures for the prevention of, and response to, incidents of violence and aggression.

- A system of risk assessment will be used to determine the best measures to safeguard staff. The range of measures to be applied, including training for staff, is set out later in this document.
- All incidents of violence and aggression at work **must** be reported. [KSM staff complete a KSM Work Related Violence and Abuse reporting form and a Wiltshire Council Report an Incident Online form.](#)
- Where an incident takes place within a school environment, support will be offered initially by schools themselves and then, if necessary, by the Council.
- The range of measures to be applied is set out later in this document and should be offered as appropriate to the incident. Individuals are encouraged to identify any additional support they may need.
- Staff are expected to take account of their own safety when considering their actions in intervening in violent incidents between children or adults using the service.

5. General Security

All schools need to be open to the public at some points, wholly or in part. Uncontrolled access to all areas may expose some staff to unnecessary risk. All buildings, therefore, must be assessed to identify which parts need to have restricted access achievable through security locks.

- Keys and door entry combinations should be restricted to authorised personnel only and combinations should be regularly changed.
At KSM external gates are locked between 9.00am and 3.25pm. The internal door into the main building is fitted with a security keypad. The school is fully intruder alarmed and external gates are locked when the school is closed.



- Systems to register all visitors, including the use of identification badges, help minimise unauthorised access. Staff should challenge any unauthorised persons. Registered visitors should check out and return their badges after use.
At KSM all visitors sign in on arrival and wear a coloured lanyard, colour depending on whether they are a Governor (yellow), Staff (blue), visitor with a KSM DBS (green) or a general unchecked visitor who needs constant supervision when in school (red). All DBS certificates are checked where applicable.
- A means of summoning emergency assistance should be available in areas where there is a significant possibility of encountering violent or aggressive behaviour. This may include isolated parts of a school such as mobile classrooms. Any such system is tested including the reaction to the alarm from other staff.
At KSM a school mobile phone is available and can be used by staff to contact the school office for immediate support. Staff can use a whistle to summon help if outside in the school grounds. If help is needed in a classroom a red 'help' triangle card is sent to any member of staff in the main building. This means immediate help is required.
- Where a pupil is suspected of carrying a prohibited item or an item banned under the school's Behaviour Policy, a search will be considered by an authorised member of staff.
- Where there is a risk of violence and aggression, or challenging behaviour, the school will conduct a risk assessment to identify hazards and implement mitigating measures. All staff likely to be exposed to a pupil known to be at risk of being violent will be fully trained and made aware of potential trigger situations and prevention measures.
- Staff will be strongly encouraged to raise any incidents of violence or abuse, including threats, they experience or witness with their line manager or the headteacher. All staff will receive awareness training on work-related violence and parental violence and aggression, and are informed of relevant school policies and procedures at induction.

6. Suitable Working Environments

- All public areas are well signed.
- Reception areas are, where practicable, properly staffed and kept in a clean, well-lit and comfortable state. They have adequate space with sufficient seating. Tension building boredom may be relieved by the provision of reading material or toys for those waiting.
- Using waiting areas as thoroughfares should be avoided if possible.
- Meeting rooms where possible should have an unobscured vision panel in the door and be furnished with consideration to items being used as weapons or barricades.
- A means of summoning emergency assistance should be available in areas where there is a significant likelihood of encountering violent or aggressive behaviour.
- All external areas used during hours of darkness must be adequately lit.
- Classroom layout will be governed by space and teaching needs but wherever possible staff should base themselves in a position which allows sight of all entrances and immediate access to at least one of them.



7. Working practices and patterns

- **Staff should recognise that their own attitudes and modes of behaviour are likely to be reflected by those using the service or coming into contact.**
- Before meeting a visitor or parent, staff should refer to any information available about that person's potential for violence. For this to be an effective precaution, it is essential that all relevant information about previous incidents is recorded and shared with staff. If it is anticipated that a visitor may display aggressive behaviour then staff should consider whether to meet with that person alone and should prepare their responses to any violent or aggressive behaviour in advance of the meeting.
- Staff should avoid working in isolation, particularly out of normal hours. After evening functions, staff should consider leaving in groups rather than individually.
- If telephone callers become abusive or threatening, staff may issue a caution along the lines of, 'if you continue to be abusive, I shall put the telephone down', and then do so if the caller persists. Abusive calls should be logged on CPOMS and the head teacher informed.
- Visiting unknown clients, parents, service users at home, may pose additional risks and should always be subject to a risk assessment. As part of the risk assessment, it may be necessary to involve additional colleagues and / or the police.
- Whenever working away from school, staff must always ensure that a colleague has details of their programme and whether or not they are intending to return to school. Local procedures must be in place to respond to concern about the non-arrival or return of colleagues. (See Section on Lone Working).
- When travelling by car or cycle, staff should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, that the route is planned, that the foot journey at their destination is as short as possible and that vehicles are left in well-lit and secure areas.
- Staff should avoid wearing clothing or jewellery that could be grabbed and used to inflict injury on the wearer.
- **Staff involved in emergency responses should take account of the advice within this section as far as is possible and should not, in any circumstances, place themselves or colleagues at undue risk.**

8. Responding to incidents

Only by reporting incidents can working practices and procedures be adjusted to provide as much protection for staff as is possible. The accumulative effect of several minor incidents can be just as harmful as that from those of a more serious nature and staff should not overlook these 'lesser' incidents. It is important to ensure that such a record of minor incidents is kept.

At KSM all incidents relating to pupils must also be logged on CPOMS.

Where a member of staff is being abused, threatened or attacked, they will approach or alert a colleague for support and consider de-escalation strategies. Where available, a member of the SLT will respond and attempt to de-escalate the situation. If necessary the emergency services will be contacted. Medical assistance will be provided immediately where required.

Staff may use reasonable force where necessary to restrain a pupil being violent towards a member of staff, in line with the Physical Intervention Policy. Pupils will be sanctioned



afterwards in line with the Behaviour Policy, with a suspension or exclusion considered in line with the Suspension and Exclusion Policy if appropriate.

Where the behaviour of a member of staff caused or escalated the incident, the incident will be investigated and responded to in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Full guidance on the reporting of incidents is given in the Health and Safety for Schools Manual, the Corporate Health and Safety Manual and in The Use of Physical Interventions by Staff - Policy Statement and Guidance.

9. Physical Intervention (Control and Restraint)

As a general rule, **physical interventions should only be used as a last resort when other strategies have been tried and found to be unsuccessful or when the risks of not employing an intervention outweigh the risks of using reasonable force.**

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force' so it is not possible to set out comprehensively when it is reasonable to use force, or the degree of force that may reasonably be used. It will always depend on all the circumstances of the case.

There are two relevant considerations:

- the use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of **any** degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant such use;
- the degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. The degree of force and the duration of its application should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

It is a criminal offence to use physical force, or to act in a way that leads another person to fear the use of force (for example, by raising a fist or issuing a verbal threat), unless the circumstances give rise to a 'lawful excuse' or justification for the use of that force. Such justification may be to prevent an injury to oneself or to others or to prevent serious damage to property. In these circumstances, a reasonable amount of force may be used. Staff should be aware that the use of unjustified and excessive force might be an offence. All instances of physical intervention must be recorded in accordance with school policies.

At KSM individual staff have received team Teach training. Team Teach is a positive behaviour training course that provides a holistic approach to managing behaviour for individuals and organisations working with children and adults. Team Teach empowers staff to:

- Understand the drivers and motivations displayed by individuals who are distressed and may become aggressive and disruptive
- Build a stronger team confidence around supporting behaviour
- Utilise a toolkit of holistic strategies on de-escalation and crisis intervention, including the importance of targeted communication, both verbal and non-verbal.
- Understand and know relevant legal standards and expectations related to use of force, and of the reporting, recording, monitoring and evaluating requirements of incidents involving physical controls and reasonable force.
- Execute simple and safe positive handling and personal safety techniques: including guiding, escorting and holding in standing, sitting and kneeling positions safely, appropriate for your service setting needs, which focus on maximum care -minimum force



- Improve expertise and confidence in staying safe, competence to carry out simple de-escalation strategies, and applying physical intervention in conjunction with a needs analysis.

More advice on physical interventions is available in the Department of Children and Education's policy document 'The Use of Physical Interventions by Staff – Policy Statement and Guidance'.

10. Self Defence

Leaving or getting away is often the best defence using any pretext that may work but individuals do have the legal right to defend themselves, or others, if attacked. The amount and degree of defensive force used must be proportional to the level of risk being faced. This will depend upon the circumstances. You do not have to be hit first if you are in genuine fear of being injured.

The following support will be provided for a member of staff subjected to work-related violence:

- **Debriefing** – A discussion will take place with the staff member's line manager or the headteacher as soon as possible to understand their experience and how they may be affected
- **Time off work** – Where necessary, the member of staff will be provided time to recover from the experience. An assessment will be made to see if specialist counselling may be required.
- **Legal help** – In serious cases, legal assistance will be considered.
- **Guidance and training** – Additional guidance and/or training will be considered for the staff member to help them feel more confident in responding to a further work-related violence incident.
- Any pupils who were also affected by an incidence of violence, including as witnesses, will be spoken to by an appropriate member of staff to identify where support may be required to help them deal with their experience.

KSM has a comprehensive Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. These are reviewed annually by staff and Governors.

11. Record keeping and reporting incidents

All staff will be made aware of the importance of reporting all incidences of work-related violence, including threats and verbal abuse, to their line manager or the headteacher.

At KSM staff complete a **KSM Work Related Violence and Abuse Reporting Form**. These are completed and shared with the headteacher and are stored in a locked cabinet in the headteachers office.

Incidents Information recorded will include:

- When and where the incident occurred.
- An account of what took place.
- Details of the victim(s), the assailant(s) and any witnesses.
- An assessment of the severity of the incident and its outcome.
- Any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident.



Following an incident of violence towards staff, the headteacher will review, in liaison with the SLT, any relevant school procedures to consider if lessons can be learnt to reduce the likelihood of future incidents and understand where increased vigilance may be appropriate.

In line with RIDDOR, the HSE will be notified in the event of an act of physical violence resulting in the death, specified injury, or incapacity for normal work for seven or more days of a member of staff.

The reporting process has four elements.

A form, for recording details of what individuals perceive to be minor incidents should be available at all work places.

1. The County Council's online **Report an Incident Form**. This should be used for incidents that are more serious or to highlight the cumulative effect of a series of minor incidents. Completed forms will be sent to the Occupational Health and Safety Team at County Hall, with a copy being retained at the member of staff's work base.
2. In addition to the main 'incident reporting' forms, a KSM Work Related Violence and Abuse Reporting Form should be completed and put into the 'Key Information' section of the client's or pupil's file (CPOMS)

At KSM this also added to pupil's individual CPOMS files. This form is also used for reporting any incident that could or does involve the abuse of children by an employee.

3. Headteachers should use these reports to identify measures that can reduce the likelihood of any recurrence as well as spotting regular or repeated perpetrators and victims. All reports will also be monitored centrally and regular cumulative reports will be compiled to identify trends and areas for further action.

Headteachers should be aware that if a major injury is attributable to an act of non-consensual violence for a work-related incident, then the incident must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive immediately by either telephoning 0845 300 9923 or on line by going to www.riddor.gov.uk.

Where an injury results in an absence of more than 3 days from normal work duties then the HSE must also be informed as shown above.

11.1 Short-term Debriefing

The nature and level of action following an incident will depend on the circumstances of each case. **Some 'minor' instances may not require any action but it is important that no incident is dismissed as being too trivial to deal with without first exploring the effect of it with the member of staff involved.**

Immediately after an incident, the head teacher will ensure that all necessary first aid or medical treatment is arranged.

It is probable that the victim will want to talk about the incident but may be feeling distressed or guilty. It is important that sensitive support is given at this point. The head teacher should be aware that other colleagues are likely to be seen as primary emotional supports and this may require some flexibility about the normal work routine continuing. Further opportunities to talk about the incident should be provided after a period for reflection.

All parties involved in the incident should write down their thoughts and recollection of the incident as soon as they feel able to. (KSM Work Related Violence and Abuse Reporting form). The staff member should be reminded of the Staff Counselling Service through Wiltshire Council and that a trade union or professional association representative may be present at any meeting where a discussion of the incident takes place.



All incidents should be formally acknowledged. This may be verbally and/or in writing.

Headteachers should review risk assessments and care and support programmes in the light of the incident. This should include the sharing of information protocol to ensure that all staff and other agencies are made aware of risks

11.1 Longer-term Debriefing

Victims of violence or aggression may need time to come to terms with the implications of the incident. Headteachers should be alert to the possibility that the member of staff is underestimating his or her own needs.

Other staff who may have witnessed the incident or are likely to come into contact with the aggressor should be given information about the incident and its implications. It may be useful to arrange a staff meeting to discuss feelings about the incident and assess its impact.

Any staff development needs that are highlighted by the incident should be addressed.

If a member of staff is absent from work for a lengthy period following the incident, the Human Resources and Occupational Health Service at County Hall can provide advice for employees.

11.2 Counselling

Wiltshire County Council offers a confidential counselling service to all staff. The counsellor can be contacted by telephoning 01225 713147. Only self-referrals or referrals made with the consent of the individual will be accepted. Normally a series of sessions will be available and these can take place at any suitable venue throughout the county.

11.3 Change of Duties

The staff member and Headteacher should agree any need to alter work duties as a result of the incident. This should be done such that the member of staff is not put under duress or made to feel guilty.

11.4 Involvement of the Police

The police should be informed of all incidents where a member of staff has been assaulted. In some circumstances, the member of staff may not wish the police to be involved. However, the Headteacher has the final decision and may judge that the wider protection of the community requires that a report be made to the police, notwithstanding the wishes of the individual.

If, during the course of the incident, a child is assaulted or abused, this **must** also be reported to Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA), through MASH. Tel: 0300 4560108 or the police. All establishments should be aware of these procedures, but further details can be found at www.wiltshire.gov.uk

12. Employers Liability

A member of staff who believes that they have suffered harm as a result of a work related incident should seek independent advice as to any civil claim they may have.

Where employees are covered by the County Council's Employers Liability insurance further advice can be sought from the Insurance and Risk Manager, c/o the Finance and IT Department at County Hall. Managers should redirect any correspondence or query about claims to the Insurance and Risk Manager and should not offer an opinion about the outcome.



Employees may also contact the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Details can be found at www.cica.gov.uk. In order to pursue a claim the incident must be reported to the police within 24 hours and to the Board within one year.

13. Legal Advice and Support

13.1 If an employee is the victim

If an employee is a victim of an assault which gives rise to criminal proceedings, then the County Council can provide support in terms of advising on the criminal process. However, this will not extend to bringing a civil action for damages, save to the extent that this is necessary in order to secure an injunction to prevent further assaults or harassment. If an injunction is to be sought against the perpetrator, the Solicitor to the Council can advise on each case as to whether the circumstances justify such an application or whether alternative action may be more suitable.

Any employee who believes that they have suffered harm as a result of a work related incident should seek independent advice as to any civil claim they may have. The County Council's Employers Liability insurance will apply where legal liability is established against the County Council or any other employee.

Employees may also contact the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

13.2 If an employee is alleged to have committed an offence

Where an employee is the subject of a criminal investigation as a result of allegations made by one of the County Council's clients, the County Council cannot provide legal advice or representation to that individual. This is so, even where it appears that the employee has followed the County Council's procedures.

If the police decide to take action against a member of staff then the Council will be as supportive as the merits of the case allow. However, the Council is also unable to provide financial assistance to an employee to seek his or her own legal advice and representation from another source. Nor can it reimburse an employee's legal costs in the event of a prosecution not proceeding or ending in an acquittal.

In light of these two paragraphs, **it is strongly recommended that staff consider membership of an appropriate Trade Union**. Alternatively, staff may want to consider the possibility of taking out private insurance cover for such eventualities.

13.3 If a third party claims compensation

Where an employee is the subject of civil proceedings arising from an incident in which a third party alleges injury, the matter will be dealt with under the Council's insurance arrangements, or a school's own insurance arrangements, thus protecting individual employees. The only circumstances where employees may find themselves outside the protection of the Council's or school's insurance are where criminal acts have been committed or where the individual is negligent.

14. Barring individuals from the premises

Where an individual's aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language poses a risk to staff or pupils, or makes them feel threatened, the school will consider barring the individual from the premises.

[KSM School takes a zero-tolerance approach to violence towards its staff and will always take the decision to bar an individual where this is necessary to assure the safety of its staff and pupils.](#)



The school will inform the individual that they've been barred, or of the school's intent to bar them, in writing – the letter will be signed by the headteacher. The individual will be allowed to present their side. The school will determine, considering the specific circumstances of the case and the risk posed, whether it is appropriate to bar the individual temporarily, until they have had the opportunity to formally present their side, or if they will first invite them to present their side by a set deadline.

After the individual's side has been heard, or if no response is received, the school will decide whether to continue with barring them. The decision will be reviewed within a reasonable time to be determined by the governing board considering the specific circumstances of the case.

If an individual who is barred from the premises ignores the ban and causes a nuisance or disturbance, the school will contact the police to have them removed.

15. Suspension and Exclusion of Pupils

'For the vast majority of pupils, suspensions and permanent exclusions may not be necessary, as other strategies can manage behaviour. However, if approaches towards behaviour management have been exhausted, then suspensions and permanent exclusions will sometimes be necessary as a last resort. This is to ensure that other pupils and teaching staff are protected from disruption and can learn in safe, calm, and supportive environments'.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement DFE September 2022

Permanent exclusion is only implemented in response to very serious breaches of school discipline policy and when a wide range of other strategies has been tried and failed, in line with the schools Suspension and Exclusion Policy

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher and governing board, or sooner if deemed necessary, e.g. following concerns about the effectiveness of the school's procedures or a rise in work-related violence incidences. Staff members and any relevant stakeholders will be notified of any changes made to this policy or to the school's wider procedures intended to keep staff safe.

17. Further Support and Advice

Support and advice in respect of violence to staff is available from a range of sources, including:

Human Resources Officer – general advice and report

Staff Counsellor - counselling service to individual on self-referral

Occupational Health Adviser – advice on returning to work and ill health (following a referral from HR)

Health and Safety Adviser – advice on risk assessment and reporting

In addition, schools may wish to seek advice from the following:

Educational Psychologists – advice and input on critical incidents and preventative work

Education Welfare Officers - advice and support on attendance and related issues

Child Protection Officer – advice and support to Governors and Headteachers



Legal Services – advice to Governors and Headteachers.

All of the above can be contacted through the County Hall switchboard on 01225 713000.